



THE NETWORK
OF MAJOR
EUROPEAN
CITIES

EUROCITIES Response to the Communication “A European Agenda for Culture in a globalizing world”

**Building a European Agenda for
Culture that reaches cities**

EUROCITIES

EUROCITIES is the network of major European cities. Founded in 1986, the network brings together the local governments over 130 large cities in some 34 European countries. EUROCITIES represents the interests of its members and engages in dialogue with the European institutions across a wide range of policy areas affecting cities. These include: economic development, the environment, transport and mobility, social affairs, culture, the information and knowledge society, and services of general interest.

EUROCITIES website: www.eurocities.eu

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EUROCITIES welcomes the Communication “A European agenda for culture in a globalizing world” and the pledge to put culture at the heart of the European project.

In terms of themes, EUROCITIES agrees with the three broad objectives proposed in the Communication (cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, culture as a catalyst for creativity in the framework of the Lisbon strategy, culture as a vital element in international relations) but **would like to add a fourth objective: “Culture as a means to promote inclusion and community cohesion”.**

In terms of content, the proposed agenda needs further development in order to clarify objectives and the means by which they can be achieved.

Regarding partnerships and working methods, EUROCITIES encourages the European Commission to include cities in its efforts to strengthen its policy in the cultural field. **An independent contribution from Europe’s cities would directly and usefully complement the contribution of civil society.** EUROCITIES also encourages the European Commission to develop transversal policy work and to mainstream culture in EU funding programmes.

To strengthen the content of the European Agenda for Culture, EUROCITIES recommends that:

- A fourth objective is added on culture as a key tool for inclusion and community cohesion, underlying the need to increase accessibility to culture and strengthen the link between culture and education
- Greater emphasis is placed on objectives linked to cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, especially at the local level
- New funding programmes are developed and aimed specifically to unleash the potential of the cultural and creative sector

To strengthen the methods and tools for implementing the European Agenda for Culture, EUROCITIES recommends that:

- An effective and result-oriented dialogue is implemented with the cultural sector
- Local authorities are considered as key stakeholders for such a dialogue
- The sector is consulted further on the setting-up of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) in the field of culture
- The impacts of cultural policies on local economies are better assessed

In order to help build a European Agenda for Culture that will reach the cities, EUROCITIES can offer its cooperation and partnership and provide:

- A unique opportunity to raise public awareness on European policies and events
- EUROCITIES Culture Forum meetings as a platform for exchanges with representatives of the European Commission
- A platform to identify good practices implemented by cities and to develop experimental projects

- An opportunity to organise meetings with politicians in charge of culture, given their close link both to the citizens and to national governments

INTRODUCTION

EUROCITIES believes that culture and creativity should be supported by public policies at all levels. Culture is a transversal policy framework and contributes in a number of ways to the objectives of the Lisbon strategy.

EUROCITIES very much welcomes the Communication “A European agenda for culture in a globalizing world” and the pledge to put culture at the heart of the European project. This is clearly a sign that culture is being recognized as a key action of the European Commission. Nevertheless the “European agenda for culture in a globalising world” needs further development in order to clarify objectives and the means by which they can be achieved. Only this will ensure successful results and EUROCITIES looks forward to working in partnership with the Commission and national governments to achieve this.

75% of Europeans live in large cities. Culture is a vital aspect of urban life and cities host all kinds of cultural events, from popular events to high culture. For many European cities, culture is now so important that it is placed at the heart of cities’ strategic plans.

Culture in cities should be regarded not only in terms of its artistic dimension but also as a mechanism to stimulate and promote social inclusion and urban regeneration. It also assists the creative economy in general¹. Culture is a vital pillar for the balanced and sustainable development of Europe’s cities. It is an engine for urban economic development and contributes directly to enhancing the quality of life of citizens.

In this response to the Communication “A European agenda for culture in a globalizing world” EUROCITIES will first comment on the main objectives set out for the agenda for culture and on the proposed partnerships and working methods. In conclusion EUROCITIES makes a number of recommendations, which cities believe are necessary to successfully implement the European agenda for Culture.

COMMENTING ON THE COMMUNICATION

Objectives: Building a European Agenda for Culture that reaches the Cities

In terms of themes, EUROCITIES agrees with the three broad objectives proposed by the European Commission in the European agenda for culture. However, we would like to add a

¹ The EUROCITIES Culture Forum (60 active member cities throughout Europe) is working to promote the increased recognition of culture as a vital aspect of public policies and to promote access to and participation in culture for all.

fourth broad objective: “Culture as a means to promote inclusion and community cohesion”, the content of which will be further developed below.

In terms of content, the specific objectives remain rather general and would require further development. The Communication raises a number of extremely important issues, which EUROCIITIES supports, however at times it remains unclear on the timing and methods for implementation.

Objective 1: Cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue

Europe’s large cities are meeting places for different cultures and are becoming more and more diverse. The challenge for cities is to successfully celebrate diversity while providing a framework that enables the development of a shared sense of belonging, civic pride, citizenship and urban identity. Cities have a key role to play in facilitating and supporting intercultural dialogue, promoting mutual understanding and acceptance, and overcoming barriers between different groups. Cultural activities and events can make a unique contribution to promote cultural diversity by encouraging interaction between people, the expression of cultural identity, enabling better understanding between people and tackling racist behaviour and intolerance.

Furthermore developing intercultural dialogue between European citizens and all those living in the European Union is a way to improve their sense of ‘being European’ and of being part of the Union.

EUROCIITIES therefore supports the choice of **cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue** as an objective, but believes it should be strengthened. Currently the description of this objective is restricted to high culture (e.g. mobility of artists) and to lifelong learning. Intercultural dialogue is much more than the mobility of artists, of artistic expression and of intercultural competences.

EUROCIITIES proposes the addition of the following specific objectives:

- Fostering intercultural dialogue in the everyday life of citizens
- Increasing awareness among young people of cultural diversity and promoting youth participation, especially in multicultural events
- Promoting the integration of immigrants of all ages and all communities through social and cultural activities
- Developing dialogue between people with different religious and spiritual beliefs
- Promoting a sense of shared European citizenship

Within cities, intercultural dialogue is being put into practice on a daily basis in different ways and by different groups: in the cultural life of the city, in public spaces, in schools, in daily working life and in the media. **The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 is particularly important for cities and EUROCIITIES is looking forward to playing a key role during this Year.** However, there is a need for a long-term strategy for intercultural dialogue in order to ensure long-term sustainable results. EUROCIITIES encourages the European Commission to maintain the focus on intercultural dialogue after the European Year 2008 by promoting specific policies regarding intercultural dialogue and by working together with other Directorate-Generals in the European Commission (e.g. DG Social Affairs and Employment, DG Justice and Home Affairs) in order to integrate an ‘intercultural dialogue’ dimension into European Programmes for 2007-2013 and beyond.

Objective 2: Culture as a catalyst for creativity in the framework of the Lisbon strategy for Growth and jobs

For cities the link between culture and economic growth is crucial. The study “The economy of culture in Europe” published by the European Commission in December 2006 contained important conclusions, which could provide the basis for practical actions to ensure follow-up and implementation of this objective. The three specific objectives mentioned in the Communication² do not cover all the needs of the cultural and creative sector, which faces difficulties in accessing capital and investment.

Culture is a vehicle for local economic development and job creation

Culture increases the attractiveness of cities, attracts investment and improves the quality of life of citizens.

The cultural and creative sector is one of the most competitive sectors in cities’ economies and is crucial for growth, investment and employment. Cultural and creative goods are essentially produced locally and are not easily delocalised to other continents. Europe is a huge producer of goods with intellectual property rights and the demand for cultural and creative goods is increasing. There is obviously here an enormous potential to develop in the forthcoming years.

Cultural tourism is probably the most obvious example of the contribution of culture to the economic development of large cities. European Capitals of Culture provide particularly visible examples of long-term impacts of cultural tourism on the local economy. This sector has good long-term perspectives for further development³ and **supporting the development of cultural tourism in cities would be an effective way for the Commission to help strengthen local economic growth.**

Culture fosters creativity and innovation

Culture helps drive innovation, creates new concepts and encourages the accumulation of skills and flexibility, which all help increase the competitiveness of Europe and of its cities. EUROCIITIES welcomes the European Year of Creativity and Innovation through education and culture 2009 and its ambitious objectives (raise public awareness, promote policy debate with Member States and contribute to fostering creativity, innovation and intercultural competences). In our opinion this Year should be an operating instrument linked to concrete projects. EUROCIITIES therefore regrets that no specific budget will be available for the Year 2009 and believes that this is not consistent with the ambitious objectives of the Year.

²Promote creativity in education, support the training of the cultural sector, and develop partnerships between the cultural sector and other sectors

³ e.g. ageing European population with free time to travel, emerging middle-income groups in the developing economies of India, China and Brazil for whom travel and business investments opportunities will grow

In order to help cultural and creative industries to deliver their full contribution to the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy, EUROCITIES recommends that the European Commission:

Increase financial support at European level to help cities develop more supportive and innovative instruments

Cities themselves have developed a range of innovative funding mechanisms to support cultural institutions, cultural organisations, creative entrepreneurs and SMEs: public-private partnerships, venture capital funds for creative business.

The role of local government is particularly important in supporting cultural and creative industries, as these activities tend to be very “space specific” and often differ greatly in their form of expression, even between cities in the same country. Their familiarity with the local specificities means that cities are best placed to provide support these industries, both in terms of financial support, and in ensuring the necessary preconditions are in place for culture to develop in an economically sustainable way.

Entrepreneurial talents in the creative sector must be recognised, encouraged and supported by the EU through its funding programmes. **Possibilities for the European Commission to increase the overall support to creative and cultural industries, thereby unleashing the potential of the cultural and creative sector, could include:**

- The Competitiveness and Innovation Programme
- The creation of a new category of award, under the European Enterprise Award, targeting these industries be created for the cultural and creative industries
- Special funds dedicated to creative and cultural SMEs within other programmes (e.g. those run by DG Enterprise to support SMEs)
- The EU Structural Funds
- The development of a specialized grants programme targeting cultural and creative SMEs by the European Investment Bank. The new funding possibility “JEREMIE” could serve this aim
- European programmes linking the cultural sector with various sectors such as new technologies, entrepreneurship or research would be particularly welcomed.

Develop statistical indicators on culture and on the creative economy

EUROCITIES strongly encourages the European Commission to further develop cultural indicators, both quantitative and qualitative. Such indicators would allow for a better assessment of the contribution of the cultural and creative economy to cities’ economies and would encourage local authorities to further invest into these innovative sectors⁴. Statistics and indicators on the added value of cultural tourism in cities would also be extremely useful.

Objective 3: Culture as a vital element in international relations

Culture as a vital element in international relations is an important objective of the European agenda for culture. The recent adoption of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and the promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expressions by the European Union demonstrates the importance

⁴ As recommended in the conclusions of the European project Eurocult 21, co-financed by the 5th FP and coordinated by EUROCITIES

that Europe gives to the protection and the promotion of cultural diversity in all of its manifestations, and most especially the two pillars of culture: heritage and contemporary creativity.

The systematic integration of the cultural dimension in all external and development policies, projects and programmes is a very ambitious objective that is extremely welcome, as well as developing active intercultural dialogue with all countries and regions.

EUROCITIES strongly encourages the European Commission to support specific cultural actions and events in third countries and to develop joint actions between European cities and cities from third countries. In particular, EUROCITIES would encourage the Commission to develop programmes co-funding exchanges of professionals working in the cultural field.

The positive experiences of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures could be transferred to States of the former Soviet Union.

Objective 4 (NEW): Culture as a means to promote inclusion and community cohesion

Culture is a vital element to foster social inclusion, territorial and social integration

Cultural and creative activities are a way of promoting the European values of tolerance, democracy and solidarity and are useful tools to support inter-cultural dialogue. By encouraging the use of a wide range of means of expression, cultural and creative activities can also help to integrate different parts of the population and contribute to greater social cohesion and inclusion. Activities such as the European Heritage Days or culture nights, taking place in cities all over Europe, are examples of extremely popular activities gathering the population around their local heritage and developing a sense of ownership and inclusion. Furthermore, creative and cultural industries are often established in run-down, segregated areas of cities, contributing over time to urban regeneration, and to the inclusion of these areas and their population into the mainstream activities.

Culture is for all to share: access to culture should be encouraged

A key objective of a European agenda for culture should be to encourage access to culture for all, and especially for young people. Culture contributes to the wellbeing and entitlement of citizens and to social cohesion and inclusion. Access for all citizens to culture is a means of social cohesion; in cities special efforts are being made in decentralising cultural policies and resources to deprived areas. Particular attention to the elderly will be of increasing importance given demographic trends and the need to avoid the social exclusion of the growing number of older citizens.

The links between culture and young people and culture and education should be outlined

The importance of culture for young people as well as **the link between culture and education is missing in the Communication**. Encouraging artistic education and supporting activities to bring young people into contact with culture should be two key objectives of the European action regarding culture.

Partnerships and working methods: a visible role for cities in implementing a successful European Agenda for Culture

Further developing dialogue with the cultural sector

EUROCITIES warmly welcomes the initiative of the European Commission to develop a structured dialogue with stakeholders from the culture sector. However, this partnership needs to be effective and to produce concrete results. Regular exchange of views and best practices input into the policy-making process and follow-up and evaluation are welcome.

Mapping the cultural sector in order to have a clearer picture of “who does what” is certainly a very interesting initiative, as long as the sector is understood in the broadest sense, including local governments as well as the non-governmental sector.

EUROCITIES clearly has an important contribution to make to this dialogue. As the main centres of creativity and culture in Europe, large cities are important stakeholders. They have a role to play in ensuring that the framework and conditions exist within which the cultural sector can flourish. Most cultural productions and most of the institutions and initiatives in the cultural field are based in major cities. Furthermore, EUROCITIES, through its membership, can also act as a positive supportive voice towards national governments. Therefore **EUROCITIES encourages the Commission to include cities in its efforts to strengthen its policy in the cultural field.** The EUROCITIES Culture Forum is ready to work closely to the European Commission on this issue.

The heterogeneity of the cultural sector makes it unlikely that one single self-structuring platform will emerge. The cultural sector is not only made up of civil society organisations but also includes public sector actors that provide a framework for cultural actions. EUROCITIES believes that it is important that the future structured dialogue does not focus only on civil society organisations. As a political organisation, it may be difficult for EUROCITIES to fit into civil society platforms. Whilst civil society organizations and local government have to work together, also at local level, they nevertheless have different roles to play, albeit complementary.

Furthermore, as democratically elected government their specific political contribution should be recognised. **An independent contribution from Europe’s cities would directly complement civil society contribution.**

EUROCITIES strongly supports the idea to set up a Cultural Forum, which will provide excellent opportunities for stakeholders to meet, share their views and exchange practices. Annual meetings would provide a good basis for the consultation of stakeholders.

Setting up an open method of coordination (OMC)

The Communication proposes that Member States endorse the objectives of the “European agenda for culture” and implement them in full respect of their autonomy through the OMC.

A well defined Open Method of Coordination could perhaps be a useful instrument to reach a more reliable form of cooperation on the European level but a full cost-benefit analysis should be carried out to assess its potential efficiency. This is a complex question and *a priori* impact assessment of the OMC in the field of culture would be extremely useful. **Further consultation of the cultural sector would be welcome,** as the possibility of applying the OMC to culture was not

raised in prior consultations.

Two issues in particular require further consideration. First, **what kind of common objectives would be decided at Member State level?** Secondly, the Communication states that Member States would be encouraged to fully associate local and regional authorities. Greater detail is required on how this process will work. Policy sectors currently subject to OMC have not shown clear results of a successful involvement of the local and regional level in strategy development and implementation at national level. The question therefore remains open as to whether the OMC is the best means of ensuring a multi-level partnership that goes beyond the national level and includes stakeholders at other levels.

Supporting evidence-based policy-making

EUROCITIES strongly supports the need for evidence-based policy making and recognises the current lack of comparable data. EUROCITIES encourages the Commission to support research on culture from an economic approach and suggests that new tools for the resourcing of cultural activities be identified in order to sustain cultural institutions, activities and industries, and encourages the spread of best practices in this domain.

New key performance indicators could be developed in order to better assess the impacts of cultural policies and to define new needs and perspectives. **EUROCITIES and in particular its Culture Forum has a valuable contribution to make and would like to contribute to the process.**

Mainstreaming culture in all relevant policies

The creative and cultural economy is not yet taken into sufficient consideration by the different Directorates-General of the European Commission.

EUROCITIES strongly encourages the European Commission to develop transversal policy work between DG Education and Culture and other DGs like DG Employment and Social Affairs, DG Regional Policy and DG Enterprise and Industry.

Mainstreaming culture in EU funding programmes is also a key aspect. Europe has to sustain the transversal role of culture even in those calls which are not specifically dedicated to culture.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To strengthen the content of the European Agenda for Culture, EUROCITIES recommends that:

- A new set of objectives is included on culture as a key tool for inclusion and community cohesion, underlying the need to increase accessibility to culture and strengthen the link between culture and education
- Greater emphasis is placed on objectives linked to cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, especially at the local level
- New funding programmes are developed and aimed specifically to unleash the potential of the cultural and creative sector

To strengthen the methods and tools for implementing the European Agenda for Culture, EUROCITIES recommends that:

- An effective and result-oriented dialogue is implemented with the cultural sector
- Local authorities are considered as key stakeholders for such a dialogue, in addition to civil society actors
- The cultural sector is consulted further on the setting-up of the OMC in the field of culture
- The impacts of cultural policies on local economies are better assessed

In order to help build a European Agenda for Culture that will reach the cities, EUROCITIES can offer its cooperation and partnership and provide:

- A unique opportunity to raise public awareness on European-scale policies and events such as the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue
- EUROCITIES Culture Forum meetings as a platform for discussion and exchanges with representatives of the European Commission
- A platform to identify good practices implemented by cities and to develop experimental projects regarding specific aspects of the European Agenda for Culture
- An opportunity to organise meetings with elected politicians in charge of culture in Europe's major cities, given their close link both to the citizens and to the national governments